What is claimed is:

1   1.   A method for handling digital messages, the method comprising the steps

2   of:

3   determining whether an email message meets a predefined condition; and

4   executing an action in an instant messaging (IM) system in response to

5   determining that the email message meets the predefined condition.

1   2.   The method of claim 1, wherein the step of determining whether the email

2   message meets a predefined condition comprises the step of extracting contact

3   information from the email message, the contact information being associated with a

4   sender of the email message.

1   3.   The method of claim 2, wherein the step of executing the action in the IM

2   system comprises the steps of:

3   determining a presence of the sender using the extracted contact information, the

4   presence being indicative of whether the user is present online; and

5   initiating an IM chat session with the sender in response to determining that the

6   sender is present online.

1   4.   A method for handling digital messages, the method comprising the steps

2   of:

3   providing a programming interface, the programming interface adapted to receive

4   user input, the user input being provided in a markup language; and

5   storing inputs provided by a user at the programming interface, the inputs being

6   provided in the markup language, the inputs comprising a condition, the inputs further

7   comprising an action.

1   5.   The method of claim 4, further comprising the steps of:

2   receiving a digital message from a message sender;

3   determining whether the digital message meets the condition; and

4   executing the action in response to determining that the digital message meets the

5   condition.

1   6.   The method of claim 5, wherein the step of determining whether the digital

2   message meets the condition comprises the steps of:

3   determining whether the digital message includes a request for a file.

1   7.   The method of claim 6, wherein the step of executing the action comprises

2   the steps of:

3   determining whether the file is accessible;

4   retrieving the file in response to determining that the file is accessible; and

5   transmitting the file to the message sender in response to retrieving the file.

1   8.   A method for handling digital messages, the method comprising the steps

2   of:

3   determining whether a digital message meets a predefined condition; and

4   executing a filtering algorithm on the digital message in response to determining

5   that the digital message does not meet the predefined condition.

1   9.   The method of claim 8, wherein the predefined condition is selected from

2 the group consisting of:

3   the digital message includes a specified Internet address of a sender;

4   the digital message includes a specified Internet address of a primary recipient;

5   the digital message includes a specified Internet address of a secondary recipient;

6   the digital message includes a specified Internet domain;

7   the digital message includes a specified word in a subject line of the digital

8 message;

9   the digital message includes a specified word in a text body of the digital message;

10   the digital message includes a specified hypertext markup language (HTML) tag

11 in the digital message;

12   the digital message includes a specified extensible markup language (XML) tag in

13 the digital message;

14   the digital message has an empty subject line;

15   the digital message has no content;

16   the digital message exceeds a specified size;

17   the digital message originated from a specified source Internet protocol (IP)

18 address; and

19   combinations thereof.

1   10.   A computer-readable medium comprising:

2   computer-readable code adapted to instruct a programmable device to determine

3   whether an email message meets a predefined condition; and

4   computer-readable code adapted to instruct a programmable device to execute an

5   action in an instant messaging (IM) system in response to determining that the email

6   message meets the predefined condition.

1   11.   The computer-readable medium of claim 10, further comprising computer-

2   readable code adapted to instruct a programmable device to extracting contact

3   information from the email message, the contact information being associated with a

4   sender of the email message.

1   12.   The computer-readable medium of claim 11, further comprising:

2   computer-readable code adapted to instruct a programmable device to determine a

3   presence of the sender using the extracted contact information, the presence being

4   indicative of whether the user is present online; and

5   computer-readable code adapted to instruct a programmable device to initiate an

6   IM chat session with the sender in response to determining that the sender is present

7   online.

1   13.   A computer-readable medium comprising:

2   computer-readable code representing a condition, the condition being in a markup

3   language; and

4   computer-readable code representing an action, the action being in a markup

5   language.

1   14.   The computer-readable medium of claim 13, further comprising:

2   computer-readable code adapted to instruct a programmable device to receive a

3   digital message from a message sender;

4   computer-readable code adapted to instruct a programmable device to determine

5   whether the digital message meets the condition; and

6   computer-readable code adapted to instruct a programmable device to execute the

7   action in response to determining that the digital message meets the condition.

1   15.   The computer-readable medium of claim 14, further comprising:

2   computer-readable code adapted to instruct a programmable device to determine

3   whether the digital message includes a request for a file.

1   16.   The computer-readable medium of claim 15, further comprising:

2   computer-readable code adapted to instruct a programmable device to determine

3   whether the file is accessible;

4   computer-readable code adapted to instruct a programmable device to retrieve the

5   file in response to determining that the file is accessible; and

6   computer-readable code adapted to instruct a programmable device to transmit the

7   file to the message sender in response to retrieving the file.

1   17.   A computer-readable medium comprising:

2   computer-readable code adapted to instruct a programmable device to determine

3   whether a digital message meets a predefined condition; and

4   computer-readable code adapted to instruct a programmable device to execute a

5   filtering algorithm on the digital message in response to determining that the digital

6   message does not meet the predefined condition.

1   18.   A system for handling digital messages, the system comprising:

2   means for determining whether an email message meets a predefined condition;

3   and

4   means for executing an action in an instant messaging (IM) system in response to

5   determining that the email message meets the predefined condition.

1   19.   A system for handling digital messages, the system comprising:

2   condition-determination logic adapted to determine whether an email message

3   meets a predefined condition; and

4   command execution logic adapted to execute an action in an instant messaging

5   (IM) system in response to determining that the email message meets the predefined

6   condition.

1   20.   The system of claim 19, further comprising information-extraction logic

2   adapted to extract contact information from the email message, the contact information

3   being associated with a sender of the email message.

1   21.   The system of claim 20, further comprising:

2   presence-determination logic adapted to determine a presence of the sender using

3   the extracted contact information, the presence being indicative of whether the user is

4   present online; and

5   IM-chat-initiation logic adapted to initiate an IM chat session with the sender in

6   response to determining that the sender is present online.

1   22.   A system for handling digital messages, the system comprising:

2   program-interface logic configured to provide a programming interface, the

3   programming interface adapted to receive user input, the user input being provided in a

4   markup language; and

5   input-storage logic configured to store inputs provided by a user at the

6   programming interface, the inputs being provided in the markup language, the inputs

7   comprising a condition, the inputs further comprising an action.

1   23.   A system for handling digital messages, the system comprising:

2   means for providing a programming interface, the programming interface adapted

3   to receive user input, the user input being provided in a markup language; and

4   means for storing inputs provided by a user at the programming interface, the

5   inputs being provided in the markup language, the inputs comprising a condition, the

6   inputs further comprising an action.

1   24.   A system for handling digital messages, the system comprising:

2   means for determining whether a digital message meets a predefined condition;

3 . and

4   means for executing a filtering algorithm on the digital message in response to

5 determining that the digital message does not meet the predefined condition.

1   25.   A system for handling digital messages, the system comprising:

2   condition-determination logic adapted to determine whether a digital message

3 meets a predefined condition; and

4   command execution logic adapted to execute a filtering algorithm on the digital

5 message in response to determining that the digital message does not meet the predefined

6 condition.